

The Honorable Michael K. Powell
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Powell:

I am writing to you as a current satellite TV subscriber who would like to add my voice of support to the pending merger of EchoStar and DIRECTV, even though as of today, you apparently have rejected the merger.

In light of the obvious fact that this decision flies directly in the face of many other mergers (most notably AOL, Time-Warner, Disney, CNN, etc.) which goes against all anti-trust thinking of the past, you must all be a bunch of morons, or you have received a hefty pay-off from 'Cable'.

The 'AOL' merger does the unthinkable; it ties a major internet provider (in subscribers, about the same as Dishnet and Direct TV together) together with 'Top of the Hill' print (Time), a large part of Hollywood, and TV News.

CNN even admitted on the air that it hesitated to show drops in stock prices of those companies who were a part of the (anti-trust gang). You may have noticed, and if you haven't, you are also blind morons, that virtually all shows on 'TV' have two internet address references - the 'Normal' one, and AOL. During the past few weeks it has turned to AOL first then the 'Normal' WWW address second. How long will it be for AOL is the ONLY address? The combination of these two satellite providers would have provided numerous benefits to consumers like me, including more choices in channels, programming, broadband and new television technologies.

By merging, the combined company would have been a much stronger competitor to cable television and can offer more programming choices and, most importantly, all local TV channels in every market in the U.S. By providing local TV channels everywhere, this merger would have made satellite television a strong alternative to cable in our community. Throughout the country, people could have now been able to turn to satellite TV to access their local news, weather and community information, in addition to a comprehensive package of national video programming. But just as important, the merger brings the availability of affordable high-speed Internet service by satellite to over 40 million Americans who don't have, and now will never have high-speed Internet access unless we pay very high prices. These tremendous benefits to consumers won't happen without the merger. Satellite-delivered Internet service brings an affordable and competitive alternative to cable modems and DSL to consumers in big cities, small towns and rural areas alike.

This will give me a competitive choice for Internet access and will be especially advantageous to rural communities where cable modems and DSL are not likely to be available anytime in the near future.

Since I live in a rural community in California's Mojave Desert, and had to be affiliated with the only choice offered as Cable, or use TV antennas (plural) 30 feet in the air, and as a cable viewer, watch our prices go up and up and up, I can make a direct comparison to my current DishNet reception and their pricing. There is no comparison; my current fee is about the same as I was paying my cable company several years ago and I receive nearly four times the number of choices of stations - all digital. Our local cable has changed names (affiliations - or should I suggest mergers - but of course YOU have no control over CABLE!!-they connect by wires) and just incre

ased their rates 60% - this week (because they finally made it to digital and still offer less than half the number of station choices). Many Rural friends of mine are quickly moving to satellite.

You have a grossly misplaced idea of equality by disallowing the merger of two companies whose current total combined subscribers numbers less than that of Adelphia in just the Los Angeles area, let alone the whole USA (you know, the one who went chapter 11 three weeks ago, and is still advertising for new subscribers on various stations (I used to believe bankrupt meant out of business - but I guess that is only true if you don't have the right friends in the FCC))

Sincerely,

Charles Richey
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North Edwards, CA 93523